

**CLAIMS**

2           1. An initiation assembly for an inflator for a pyrotechnic device, the

3 initiation assembly comprising:

4 an initiator comprising a center pin disposed to convey an activation signal to  
5 trigger ignition of a quantity of ignition material;

6 a body disposed to encircle at least a portion of the initiator; and

a cover attached to the body through a method selected from the group consisting of snap fitting, vibratory welding, and electromagnetic welding to encircle at least a portion of the initiator.

10

11        2. The initiation assembly of claim 1, wherein the initiator further comprises  
12        a header eyelet encircling at least a portion of the center pin and a bridge wire that  
13        electrically couples the center pin and the header eyelet together such that passage of the  
14        activation signal through the bridge wire ignites the bridge wire to ignite the ignition  
15        material.

16

17       3. The initiation assembly of claim 2, wherein the cover is attached to the  
18 body to electrically insulate the initiator.

19

20        4. The initiation assembly of claim 1, wherein the body and the cover are  
21 formed from polymeric materials and the cover comprises a rim, wherein the rim is  
22 ultrasonically welded to the body.

1       5. The initiation assembly of claim 1, wherein the cover comprises a rim  
2 comprising an inward taper and the body comprises a lip, wherein the rim is elastically  
3 enlargeable to snap fit the rim to the lip.

4

5       6. The initiation assembly of claim 1, wherein the body is press fit into place  
6 to prevent moisture entry into the inflator and to prevent inflation gases from exiting the  
7 inflator through a region encircling the body.

8

9       7. The initiation assembly of claim 1, further comprising an o-ring that  
10 encircles a portion of the body to prevent moisture entry into the inflator and inflation gas  
11 exit from the inflator through a region encircling the body.

12

13       8. The initiation assembly of claim 1, further comprising a sealing member  
14 disposed to encircle at least a portion of the body, the sealing member comprising an  
15 annular ridge disposed to press into the body to prevent moisture entry into the inflator  
16 and inflation gas exit from the inflator through a region encircling the body.

17

18       9. The initiation assembly of claim 1, wherein the body is part of a receptacle  
19 defined by the initiation assembly for receiving a connector such that the connector  
20 engages the initiator to enable transmission of the activation signal from the connector to  
21 the initiator.

1           10. The initiation assembly of claim 9, wherein the receptacle comprises a  
2 plurality of splines shaped to mate with at least one rib of the connector such that the  
3 connector is engageable with the retainer in at least three orientations, wherein the splines  
4 and the rib mesh to prevent rotation of the connector between the orientations.

5

6           11. The initiation assembly of claim 9, wherein the receptacle comprises a  
7 washer comprising an inside diameter disposed to receive the connector, the connector  
8 comprising at least one projection, wherein the washer is disposed to engage the  
9 projection when the connector engages the initiator to restrict withdrawal of the  
10 connector from the initiator.

11

12          12. The initiation assembly of claim 9, wherein the receptacle is disposed  
13 within a housing of the inflator, wherein the housing is shaped to retain the body, the  
14 housing comprising an inside diameter through which the connector is insertable, wherein  
15 the connector comprises at least one projection and the housing is disposed to engage the  
16 projection when the connector engages the initiator to restrict withdrawal of the  
17 connector from the initiator.

18

19          13. The initiation assembly of claim 9, wherein the receptacle comprises a  
20 collar shaped to retain the body, the collar comprising an inside diameter disposed to  
21 receive the connector, the connector comprising at least one projection, wherein the collar  
22 is disposed to engage the projection when the connector engages the initiator to restrict  
23 withdrawal of the connector from the initiator.

1        14. The initiation assembly of claim 9, wherein the receptacle comprises a  
2 retainer attached to the body, wherein the retainer is formed of a polymer and has a  
3 generally annular shape, wherein the connector comprises at least one projection and the  
4 retainer is disposed to engage the projection when the connector engages the initiator to  
5 restrict withdrawal of the connector from the initiator.

6

7        15. The initiation assembly of claim 14, wherein the receptacle is shaped to  
8 interchangeably interlock with a nonremovable connector and with a removable  
9 connector comprising a main body and a locking bracket movable with respect to the  
10 main body between an unlocked position in which the connector is removable from the  
11 retainer and a locked position in which the connector is not removable from the retainer.

1        16. An initiation assembly for a pyrotechnic device, the initiation assembly  
2 comprising:

3              an initiator comprising a quantity of ignition material that ignites in response to  
4 receipt of an activation signal;

5              a body disposed to encircle at least a portion of the initiator; and

6              a sealing member disposed to encircle at least a portion of the body, the sealing  
7 member comprising an annular ridge disposed to press into the body to prevent moisture  
8 entry into the inflator and inflation gas exit from the inflator through a region encircling  
9 the body.

10  
11        17. The initiation assembly of claim 16, wherein the initiator further  
12 comprises a center pin, a header eyelet encircling at least a portion of the center pin, and  
13 a bridge wire that electrically couples the center pin and the header eyelet together such  
14 that passage of the activation signal through the bridge wire ignites the bridge wire to  
15 ignite the ignition material.

16  
17        18. The initiation assembly of claim 17, further comprising a cover attached to  
18 the body through a method selected from the group consisting of snap fitting, vibratory  
19 welding, and electromagnetic welding to encircle at least a portion of the initiator.

20  
21        19. The initiation assembly of claim 16, wherein the sealing member  
22 comprises a collar shaped to retain the body.

1           20. The initiation assembly of claim 16, wherein the annular ridge comprises a  
2 cross section in which two surfaces of the annular ridge meet at an angle of  
3 approximately ninety degrees to facilitate deformation of the body by the annular ridge.

4

5           21. The initiation assembly of claim 16, wherein the sealing member  
6 comprises a generally conical interior surface that abuts the body, wherein the annular  
7 ridge projects inward from the generally conical interior surface.

8

9           22. The initiation assembly of claim 16, wherein the body is part of a  
10 receptacle defined by the initiation assembly for receiving a connector such that the  
11 connector engages the initiator to enable transmission of the activation signal from the  
12 connector to the initiator.

13

14           23. The initiation assembly of claim 22, wherein the receptacle comprises a  
15 plurality of splines shaped to mate with at least one rib of the connector such that the  
16 connector is engageable with the retainer in at least three orientations, wherein the splines  
17 and the rib mesh to prevent rotation of the connector between the orientations.

1           24. An inflator for an airbag module for protecting an occupant of a vehicle  
2 from impact, the inflator comprising:

3           a housing;  
4           an initiator disposed at least partially within the housing, the initiator comprising  
5 a quantity of ignition material that ignites in response to receipt of an activation signal;  
6 and

7           a washer comprising an inside diameter disposed to receive a connector such that  
8 the connector engages the initiator to enable transmission of the activation signal from  
9 the connector to the initiator, the connector comprising at least one projection, wherein  
10 the washer is disposed to engage the projection when the connector engages the initiator  
11 to restrict withdrawal of the connector from the initiator.

12

13           25. The inflator of claim 24, wherein the initiator further comprises a center  
14 pin, a header eyelet encircling at least a portion of the center pin, a cup attached to the  
15 header eyelet to provide a hermetic seal, and a bridge wire that electrically couples the  
16 center pin and the header eyelet together such that passage of the activation signal  
17 through the bridge wire ignites the bridge wire to ignite the ignition material.

18

19           26. The inflator of claim 25, further comprising a body disposed to encircle at  
20 least a portion of the initiator and a cover attached to the body through a method selected  
21 from the group consisting of snap fitting, vibratory welding, and electromagnetic welding  
22 to encircle at least a portion of the initiator.

1           27. The inflator of claim 26, further comprising a collar disposed within the  
2 housing to retain the body.

3

4           28. The inflator of claim 26, wherein the body is part of a receptacle that  
5 receives a connector such that the connector engages the initiator to enable transmission  
6 of the activation signal from the connector to the initiator.

7

8           29. The inflator of claim 28, wherein the receptacle comprises a plurality of  
9 splines shaped to mate with at least one rib of the connector such that the connector is  
10 engageable with the retainer in at least three orientations, wherein the splines and the rib  
11 mesh to prevent rotation of the connector between the orientations.

12

13          30. The inflator of claim 24, wherein the housing is crimped to retain the  
14 washer within the housing.

15

16          31. The inflator of claim 24, wherein the washer is welded to the housing.

1       32. An inflator for an airbag module for protecting an occupant of a vehicle  
2 from impact, the inflator comprising:

3             a housing;  
4             an initiator retained within the housing, the initiator comprising a quantity of  
5 ignition material and a center pin disposed to convey an activation signal to trigger  
6 ignition of the ignition material; and

7             a cover disposed to encircle at least a portion of the initiator through a method  
8 selected from the group consisting of snap fitting, vibratory welding, and electromagnetic  
9 welding.

10

11       33. The inflator of claim 32, further comprising a body disposed to encircle at  
12 least a portion of the initiator, wherein the initiator further comprises a header eyelet  
13 encircling at least a portion of the center pin and a bridge wire that electrically couples  
14 the center pin and the header eyelet together such that passage of the activation signal  
15 through the bridge wire ignites the bridge wire to ignite the ignition material.

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17       34. The inflator of claim 33, wherein the body and the cover are formed from  
18 polymeric materials and the cover comprises a rim, wherein the rim is ultrasonically  
19 welded to the body.

20

21       35. The inflator of claim 33, wherein the cover comprises a rim comprising an  
22 inward taper and the body comprises a lip, wherein the rim is elastically enlargeable to  
23 snap fit the rim to the lip.

1       36. The inflator of claim 33, wherein a region encircling the body is sealed to  
2 prevent moisture entry into the inflator and inflation gas exit out of the inflator via one of  
3 a press fit, an o-ring, and an annular ridge disposed to press into the body.

4

5       37. The inflator of claim 33, wherein the body is part of a receptacle defined  
6 by the initiation assembly for receiving a connector such that the connector engages the  
7 initiator to enable transmission of the activation signal from the connector to the initiator,  
8 wherein the receptacle comprises a plurality of splines shaped to mate with at least one  
9 rib of the connector such that the connector is engageable with the retainer in at least one  
10 three orientations, wherein the splines and the rib mesh to prevent rotation of the  
11 connector between the orientations.

12

13       38. The inflator of claim 33, wherein the body is part of a receptacle defined  
14 by the initiation assembly for receiving a connector such that the connector engages the  
15 initiator to enable transmission of the activation signal from the connector to the initiator,  
16 wherein the receptacle comprises a washer comprising an inside diameter disposed to  
17 receive the connector, the connector comprising at least one projection, wherein the  
18 washer is disposed to engage the projection when the connector engages the initiator to  
19 restrict withdrawal of the connector from the initiator.

1           39. An inflator for an airbag module for protecting an occupant of a vehicle  
2 from impact, the inflator comprising:

3           a housing;

4           a body retained within the housing to encircle at least a portion of an initiator; and

5           a sealing member disposed to encircle at least a portion of the body, the sealing  
6 member comprising an annular ridge disposed to press into the body to prevent moisture  
7 entry into the inflator and inflation gas exit from the inflator through a region encircling  
8 the body.

9

10          40. The inflator of claim 39, wherein the initiator further comprises a center  
11 pin, a header eyelet encircling at least a portion of the center pin, and a bridge wire that  
12 electrically couples the center pin and the header eyelet together such that passage of the  
13 activation signal through the bridge wire ignites the bridge wire to ignite the ignition  
14 material.

15

16          41. The inflator of claim 39, further comprising a cover attached to the body  
17 through a method selected from the group consisting of snap fitting, vibratory welding,  
18 and electromagnetic welding to encircle at least a portion of the initiator.

19

20          42. The initiation assembly of claim 39, wherein the sealing member  
21 comprises a collar shaped to retain the body.

1           43. The initiation assembly of claim 39, wherein the body is part of a  
2 receptacle defined by the initiation assembly for receiving a connector such that the  
3 connector engages the initiator to enable transmission of the activation signal from the  
4 connector to the initiator, wherein the receptacle comprises a plurality of splines shaped  
5 to mate with at least one rib of the connector such that the connector is engageable with  
6 the retainer in at least three orientations, wherein the splines and the rib mesh to prevent  
7 rotation of the connector between the orientations.

1           44. An airbag module for protecting an occupant of a vehicle from impact, the  
2 airbag module comprising:

3                 an electronic control unit that produces an electric activation signal in response to  
4 detection of a collision involving the vehicle;

5                 a connector coupled to the electronic control unit to receive the electric activation  
6 signal;

7                 an inflator comprising an initiator, a body disposed to encircle at least a portion of  
8 the initiator, and a cover attached to the body through a method selected from the group  
9 consisting of snap fitting, vibratory welding, and electromagnetic welding to encircle at  
10 least a portion of the initiator, wherein the inflator produces inflation gas in response to  
11 receipt of the activation signal; and

12                 a cushion disposed to receive the inflation gas and to inflate in response to receipt  
13 of the inflation gas to cushion impact of the occupant with an interior surface of the  
14 vehicle.

15

16           45. The airbag module of claim 44, wherein the initiator further comprises a  
17 header eyelet encircling at least a portion of the center pin and a bridge wire that  
18 electrically couples the center pin and the header eyelet together such that passage of the  
19 activation signal through the bridge wire ignites the bridge wire to ignite the ignition  
20 material.

1        46. The airbag module of claim 44, wherein the body and the cover are  
2 formed from polymeric materials and the cover comprises a rim, wherein the rim is  
3 ultrasonically welded to the body.

4

5        47. The airbag module of claim 44, wherein the cover comprises a rim  
6 comprising an inward taper and the body comprises a lip, wherein the rim is elastically  
7 enlargeable to snap fit the rim to the lip.

8

9        48. The airbag module of claim 44, wherein the body is part of a receptacle  
10 defined by the initiation assembly for receiving a connector such that the connector  
11 engages the initiator to enable transmission of the activation signal from the connector to  
12 the initiator, wherein the receptacle comprises a plurality of splines shaped to mate with  
13 at least one rib of the connector such that the connector is engageable with the retainer in  
14 at least three orientations, wherein the splines and the rib mesh to prevent rotation of the  
15 connector between the orientations.

1           49. A method for connecting a connector to an inflator of an airbag module  
2 for protecting an occupant of a vehicle from impact, wherein the inflator comprises a  
3 washer and an initiator, the washer comprising an inside diameter, the initiator  
4 comprising a quantity of ignition material that ignites in response to receipt of an  
5 activation signal, the connector comprising a projection, the method comprising:

6                 inserting the connector into the inside diameter of the washer such that the  
7 connector is in electrical communication with the initiator; and

8                 positioning the projection to interlock with the washer to interfere with  
9 withdrawal of the connector from the initiator.

10

11           50. The method of claim 49, wherein the initiator further comprises a header  
12 eyelet encircling at least a portion of the center pin and a bridge wire that electrically  
13 couples the center pin and the header eyelet together such that passage of the activation  
14 signal through the bridge wire ignites the bridge wire to ignite the ignition material,  
15 wherein the connector comprises a center opening, wherein inserting the connector into  
16 the inside diameter comprises inserting the center pin into the center opening.

17

18           51. The method of claim 49, wherein the projection comprises a deflectable  
19 tab extending from a main body of the connector, wherein inserting the connector into the  
20 inside diameter comprises deflecting the deflectable tab, wherein positioning the  
21 projection to interlock with the washer comprises permitting the deflectable tab to return  
22 to a substantially undeflected state after passage of the deflectable tab through the interior  
23 diameter.

1       52. A method for manufacturing an initiation assembly for a pyrotechnic  
2 device, the initiation assembly comprising a body, a cover, and an initiator comprising a  
3 quantity of ignition material that ignites in response to receipt of an activation signal, the  
4 method comprising:

5             disposing the body to encircle at least a portion of the initiator;  
6             disposing the cover to encircle at least a portion of the initiator; and  
7             attaching the cover to the body through a method selected from the group  
8 consisting of snap fitting, vibratory welding, and electromagnetic welding.

9

10       53. The method of claim 52, wherein the initiator further comprises a header  
11 eyelet encircling at least a portion of the center pin and a bridge wire that electrically  
12 couples the center pin and the header eyelet together such that passage of the activation  
13 signal through the bridge wire ignites the bridge wire to ignite the ignition material,  
14 wherein disposing the body to encircle at least a portion of the initiator comprises  
15 positioning the body to cover an outer diameter of the header eyelet.

16

17       54. The method of claim 52, wherein the body and the cover are formed from  
18 polymeric materials and the cover comprises a rim, wherein attaching the cover to the  
19 body comprises ultrasonically welding the rim to the body.

1        55. The method of claim 52, wherein the cover comprises a rim comprising an  
2 inward taper and the body comprises a lip, wherein attaching the cover to the body  
3 comprises elastically enlarging the rim, disposing the lip inward of the rim, and  
4 permitting the rim to shrink to engage the lip.

5

6        56. The method of claim 52, wherein attaching the cover to the body  
7 comprises forming a hermetic seal between the cover and the body to prevent moisture  
8 entry into the pyrotechnic device and prevent exit of gasses from the pyrotechnic device.